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ABSTRACT

A content analysis of the literature on leadership in colleges and universities and on selection, retention, and attrition of college students, especially minority students, was conducted. It is concluded that elegant questions about the structures and processes of higher education have been asked and answered, but provide little guidance in decision-making and little practical help in administration, leadership, or pedagogy. The philosophical position of critical social science suggests a whole range of questions which cannot be explored well within the bounds of conventional science, but which can be both asked and examined well utilizing critical theory. Considered are such issues as how the role of values directs and guides higher education research, what the role of moral discourse is in university life, and what the implications are when the university is considered as a moral entity. Contains approximately 175 references. (JDD)

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ADVANCING A CRITICAL AGENDA

IN

HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

By way of a content analysis of the literature in higher education's core journals, the paper suggests that higher education research has found precise answers to the wrong questions and that several issues remain unaddressed because they are perceived as unaddressable via conventional methodology or inquiry strategy. The papers considers issues such as how the role of values directs and guides higher education research, what the role of moral discourse is in university life, and what the implications are when the university is considered as a moral entity. The analysis is highlighted first by a criticism of recent exemplars of conventional higher education research, then second by the advancement of different questions and conclusions a critical theorist might develop from similar research dilemmas.

ADVANCING A CRITICAL AGENDA IN HIGHER EDUCATION

...A good campus is a kind of standing insurrection.

Donald E. Walker, Change

> My thesis is a very simple one: I do not believe that epistemology is a bloodless abstraction: the way we know has powerful implications for the way we live. I argue that every epistemology tends to become an ethic, and that every way of knowing tends to become a way of living. I argue that the relation established between the knower and the known, between the student and the subject, tends to become the relation of the living person to the world itself. I argue that every mode of knowing contains its own moral trajectory, its own ethical direction and out comes.
>
> Parker J. Palmer, 1987

This paper begins with the assumption that the higher education inquiry community has mostly proceeded on the premise that if a research question is addressed in its most theoretically, conceptually and methodologically elegant and "correct" manner, then the findings we have are the best obtainable. In some preliminary way, this paper challenges that premise, and will try to demonstrate that the observation of Heisenberg, to wit, that the questions asked determine what can be known about an entity, and that the place from which an observer observes determine what can be observed, holds as much truth for higher education as it holds for particle physics. The indeterminacy principle which Heisenberg enunciated declares that we can never simultaneously know both a particle's momentum and its weight; by the same token, no researcher can simultaneously know everything of interest to be known about a given phenomenon. Rather, we look through lenses which

represent a set of values, and attempt to take "pictures" of a phenomenon at a given moment in time. We have also acted as though those photographs ("perspectives") could, when merged and ordered taxonomically, provide us with a composite photograph which revealed everything we needed to know about the thing investigated.

The taxonomic, aggregationist model of knowledge portrays only one of many potential representations of knowing and knowledge, which we are finally beginning to understand because of advancing work on brain theory, creativity, women's "knowing", and moral/ethical problem-solving (see, for instance [in order], on brain theory, Hofstadter and Dennett, 1981; Smith, 1984; Hofstadter, 1985; Hofstadter, 1980; Restak, 1984,1988; on creativity, Getzels and Czikszentmihalyi, 1976; on women's knowing, Schaef, 1981; Belenky and others, 1986; and on ethical problem-solving, see the work of Carol Gilligan). The latest work on IQ also clues us that intelligences, and therefore knowledges, are not necessarily linear, taxonomic or hierarchical. Still, we have operated on what we took to be the best model available for investigating the unknown, the scientific method model. But we probably ought not to continue to assume that it is still the only model when we know that others are contenders for legitimacy, and when we are beginning to understand that scientific knowledge generated by one model is not the only form of knowledge available to us (and for some purposes, quite likely not the best available). We have been left in the position best described first by the statistician Tukey, and later by our own colleague, George Keller: we have very precise answers to possibly the wrong questions. We have elegant research, but very little genuine scholarship. And we would be better off

with less precise answers, and better questions than the reverse (Keller, 1985, 1986).

The Literature and A Few Good Questions

In a preliminary way, I have reviewed two sets of extremely current literature, the first on leadership in colleges and universities, the second on college students, particularly in selection, retention and attrition, and on minorities. There is no claim to comprehensiveness, because such is unwarranted for the purposes of this paper, nor is there is reason to venture far afield. The content analysis simply chose a contemporary selection of materials, in part from the most typical journals in the field of higher education, and from several recent book-length publications. The journals included The Journal of Higher Education, The Review of Higher Education, and Change Magazine, as representative of widely read periodicals[1], and were reviewed backwards for five years (to 1984).

These two particular bodies of literature were chosen for several reasons. First, they are a literature which is read by the author, since she teaches in these areas. Second, they represent problem areas, in that the literature has not proven particularly useful in solving long-term dilemmas, either regarding the nature of leadership, or with respect to how certain kinds of students might enjoy increased retention rates in higher education, or how institutions might reduce costly attrition, and hold on to dwindling numbers of traditional-aged college students. Third, they are important areas because both leadership and student attrition/retention interact with other policy arenas (e.g., state, legislative, and federal, most especially student

financial aid). Research on these areas is a hotly contested debate, and thus, it tends to have high visibility in research and administrative circles.

The Leadership literature. A simple but straightforward place to begin with the literatures is to ask, "What do we now know?" That question ought to suggest what we know, what we do not know, and how others might frame similar questions, which will be the last topic undertaken.

With respect to leadership, we know a good bit more than we did, at least in terms of the descriptive (rather than the prescriptive) literature. Since our theories of leadership have provided little in the way of guidance on the topic, we have been enriching the literatures with extensive descriptions, ethnographies, and cultural "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1983, 24-25) as a way of returning to "grounded theory". It is clear that an increasing number of researchers have tried to utilize new and emerging constructs to understand and elucidate power, leadership and the contexts in which leadership occurs (Chaffee, 1984; Knight and Holen, 1985; Chibucos and Green, 1989; Mitchell, 1987; Young, Blackburn, Conrad and Cameron, 1989; Conger, Kanungo and others, 1988; Birnbaum, 1988). Studies of organizational culture (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988; Smith and Peterson, 1988; Masland, 1985; Kolman and Hossler, 1987), and studies of symbolism (Tierney, 1989) and organizations as "enacted" social constructions (Tierney, 1987) are beginning to have an influence on the ways in which leadership is defined and researched (Birnbaum, 1989; Chaffee, 1989). Where does all this research lead us? It tells us much about what people are thinking about leadership, but little about what leaders are doing. What people say they do is, after all, not necessarily what they do. So what do we know?

Higher education can be compared, metaphorically, to a fruit-fly, coping with generations of DDT. We know that one long-term problem with insects is that they become "resistant" to the chemicals developed to eradicate them. In much the same way, higher education has "resisted" the efforts of serious researchers to unravel its mysteries, to make simple the problems it faces, or to put to rest perennial difficulties. Like the fruit-fly's genetic code confronting DDT, the "problems" of higher education are no sooner pinpointed and prescribed for than the very nature of both the problem(s) and the institution changes, rendering it more impervious to simplistic solutions and more robust in its defiance of simple solutions than previously. Furthermore, like the DDT-fruit-fly analogy, the introduction of research's solutions to some problems has created more environmental problems than it has solved.

We do understand, for instance, that critical understandings have tended to come in generations. In Birnbaum's (1989b) review of the implicit leadership theories of college presidents, he notes that there are major categories of leadership research (p.126-7). What he does not say is that such categories (representing major research streams) are, in part, generational; that is, they tend to represent successive generations of research thought and research sophistication pursued when the limits of previous research became understood. So, for instance, early research theories focussed on trait theories, presumably characteristics of "great men" acknowledged to be leaders; a second generation of leadership studies focussed on power and influence theories as a way of comprehending the extent and uses of power leaders were able to command, and the ways in which they exercised the same over persons presumed to be followers; a third generation of leadership studies focussed on behavioral theories, emphasizing "activity patterns,

managerial roles and behavior categories of leaders", and so on (Birnbaum, 1989b, p.126).

Theories of leadership seemed to parallel larger organizational theory development. As leadership theories evolved, so did understandings of organizations. Thus early organizational management studies focussed on time and motion studies, in order to comprehend how to obtain the largest number of units produced per worker, with the most efficient use of body motion; such studies were succeeded by studies of efficient organizational forms (with, for instance, a high emphasis on the bureaucracy as the peak of efficiency and rationality in organizational functioning); such studies were superseded eventually by the human relations schools, which sought to understand how workers and organizations interacted in order to accomplish organizational goals while satisfying human needs. This last school is rapidly being overtaken, I would argue, by an emphasis on culture, organizations as anthropological artifacts, as moral entities, and as political systems in which human activity is voluntarily directed for a range of self-actualizing needs (see, for instance, Robert Reich, The Next American Frontier, 198).

There remain, however, enough unanswered questions -- despite a voluminous literature -- that we still cannot provide adequate descriptions of the human organizations we inhabit, nor of the kinds of leaders they have, successful and unsuccessful, nor can we prescribe exactly what kind of leader a given organization should have (a normative rather than descriptive statement, but one which is of critical import to search and screen committees charged with identifying and hiring leaders). We have, as Keller pointed out (1985), "plentiful... research...and a good deal of it is excellent....[but]

It's scholarship that is scanty. And thought is definitely out of fashion" (p. 7).

I would argue, for instance, that we have no clearcut idea of what leadership means in any heuristic sense. Succeeding generations of leadership research have defined the term differentially (e.g., leader as the one who has followers, leader as the person empowered to exercise one or another forms of authority, leader as the person enabled to coerce goal-directed behavior on behalf of the organization). Thus, researchers typically clarify exactly what they mean by leader and leadership early on in a publication if it is not clear from the context.

We do not, additionally, have a very good sense of when, where, under what circumstances, and out of whom leadership occurs. We have focussed so systematically on those persons formally charged with managing (usually hierarchical, bureaucratic) organizations that we have failed to notice they are not the only persons exhibiting leadership behaviors. We have systematically ignored entrepreneurs (unless they are self-made millionaires), concerned citizens (MADD volunteers, for instance, or children's rights advocates), unpaid volunteers (museum or symphony boards, or PTO mothers), or others whose roles appear far too informal for our notice. In the process, we have been blind to women, minorities, the elderly, and others whose concern, outrage, energies and attention have gone into mobilizing people around the arts, civic programs, or an issue. The emphasis on formal organization has centered most of our research on for-profit groups who have been routinely managed by white, Anglo-Saxon, males, and as a result, our research has centered, as Bleier (1986) noted regarding the production of science, around the social and class preoccupations of that group. We have done relatively

little, again, with understanding why individuals are motivated to follow one person, and another another, and why the first may be the person with leadership but no authority, and the latter the individual with authority but no leadership role. We know such opinion leaders and charismatic figures exist, and we have even provided some observational data about them, but we have utterly failed to comprehend that leadership is being exhibited in ways which might inform our understanding of it in many situations. We have little, if any, understanding of the process of creating "organizational vision", and its relation to leadership potential, although we have witnessed enough fringe (and not-so-fringe) cults, jihads, radical groups, and mass suicides (e.g., the Jonestown massacre) that we should probably attend to the leadership side and relent a bit on examining "mass hysteria". We do not know whether men and women "lead" differently, or whether minority members might lead differently from majority members (of whatever gender). We don't know what sort of ethic leaders bring to their task, if any at all. We have, in short, "plentiful...research", but it has not answered the questions we needed answered yesterday.

The College Student Literature. The research is college students is even more plentiful than the research on leadership in higher education, by more than a 2-to-1 margin.[2] It is virtually impossible to review this material in any lengthy and comprehensive way, although such an effort has been the multi-year agenda now of two of our colleagues (Pascarella and Terenzini, in progress). Nevertheless, I shall try some broadbrush approach which tries to show what it is we do not know about this most widely-researched topic in postsecondary education.

We have extensive data bases which now describe, in exquisite detail, who current college students are: their ages; their demographic distributions (Estrada, 1988; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989); their mobility patterns (Ibid., 1989); their vocational interests (Katchadourian and Boli et al., 1985); how many of them are minorities and how those minorities are faring (Arbeiter, 1987; Richardson, Simmons, and de los Santos, Jr., 1987; Allen, 1987; Jackson, 1988; Winn, 1985; Hodgkinson, 1985; Coles, 1988; Estrada, 1988; Fields, 1988; Fiske, 1988; Skinner and Richardson, 1988; Levine and Hirsch, 1988; Madrid, 1988; De Necochea, 1988; Olivas, 1988; Crosson, 1988; Allen, 1988; Loo and Rolison, 1986; Nettles, Theony, and Gosman, 1986; Pascarella, Smart and Stoecker, 1989); all about the new majority in higher education - women (Solomon, 1985; Komarovsky, 1985); how the socio-economic status levels of this generation compare to the last (Smart and Pascarella, 1989), what some of the factors in college leaving and attrition might be (Tinto, 1987, 1988; Terenzini and others, 1985), and, often, what strong factors are associated with degree completion and retention (Smart and Pascarella, 1987).

We know a good bit about college choice among undergraduates ( ); how students rate the effectiveness of the instruction received (Wilson, 1988); the socioeconomic status differentials which typically exist between students who choose various kinds of institutions, and whose academic aptitude may not resemble those of more traditional college-aged students (Cross, 1978); we understand a good bit more about the needs and developmental stages of adult learners than we ever have before (Cross, ; Weidman and White, 1985; Steltenpohl and Shipton, 1986; Brazziel, 1987); and about the effects of different majors (Pascarella and Staver, 1985; Jackson, 1988; Hilton and

Lee, 1988; Simpson, 1987; Hartnett, 1987; Tidball, 1986); and we know a bit about the impact of financial aid on coming, going, and minorities (Olson and Rosenfeld, 1984; Jackson, 1988; Stampen and Fenske, 1988; Hansen, 1989; Murdock, 1987). But we have little idea how to "match" students with institutions (although we have several environmental scales which tell us something about the "personality" of al institution), in part because we don't know what the critical elements of such a match might be, we don't know whether student attrition (leaving) is a bad idea or not (at least from the perspective of the student, it sometimes is not), and we have little systematic data, save in aggregated fashion, on what the long-term outcomes of college might be on various personality, behavioral, intellective, affective, and/or job-related characteristics.

And what we still don't know would fill volumes. We don't know how, for instance, to assure that a risky student who begins college will complete his or her degree. This is particularly critical since we have minority enrollments which are skimpy at best, since those who do begin postsecondary work often drift away, and since minority persons will comprise 35% of the labor force in the year 2010. If we are to continue to fuel the information society's managerial and technological needs, who will do the work if minorities are not educated for those roles?

The troubling business about all this excellent research comes in the form of a comment made to the author personally by a researcher who has made this particular subset of higher education research his life's work. He said, with a mixture of sorrow and chagrin, "I think I'm coming to the conclusion that we have gone as far as we can go with this line of inquiry. We are going to have to rethink the questions we've been asking, and we've going to have to

change strategies for getting them answered." His problem, the problem of leadership, and the problem of higher education more generally, is a failure to be able to generate knowledge or understanding from our comprehension of micro-characteristics of phenomena which we study. As Parker Palmer (1987) put it, a central trait of the epistemology which guides higher education is objectivism, which allows us to

> ...[make] something into an object...[and once that is done], you can then chop that object up into pieces to see what makes it tick. You can dissect it, you can cut it apart, you can analyze it, even unto death. (p. 22)

We have most assuredly taken phenomena apart into their presumably smallest pieces (variables), and we have studied them extensively, precisely, and with great disinterestedness. But those studies have not yielded up great insight and understanding, nor have they allowed us to act upon our world in ways which would make it a more moral, just, or even profitable, one.

What is the answer? In simple terms, we can do as we have done, and assume that instead of our being "arrived" and mature scholars, we can believe that we are in the adolescence of our research. We can look more broadly at the ways of knowing which we have available to us. One of those ways of knowing is the so-called "critical perspective."

What does it mean to adopt the critical perspective? Discovering the principles or precepts of the critical perspective or the critical theorist (not themselves necessarily the same thing) is approximately the same order of task as "discovering" the exact axioms of logical positivism.[3] It depends on whom you consult, what you read, or your dominant reference. As a result, a variety of references were consulted, and what follows is one of the more complete statements of the contemporary critical theorist.

The Critical Perspective's Agenda

Critical theory begins with an explanation --as do all social or scientific theories -- of "the way things are". For the critical social theorist, a number of assumptions must hold. Brian Fay (1987) characterizes these givens in the following manner:

> Assume for the moment that a society is marked by fundamental structural conflict and that this conflict produces deep suffering in its members. Indeed, assume further that this conflict has reached such a proportion that it threatens to lead to the breakdown of society --that, in other words, the society is in crisis. Moreover, assume that one of the causes of this situation is the systematic ignorance that the members of this society have about themselves and their society -- that, in other words, one of the causes of the crisis and its attendant suffering is what has been traditionally called the false-consciousness of some or all of its members. Furthermore, assume that the sufferers themselves wish their suffering could cease. Lastly, assume that the social order is such that if the sufferers came to have a different understanding of themselves, they would be able to organize themselves into an effective group with the power to alter their basic social arrangements and thereby to alleviate their suffering. (p. 27-28).

It is furthermore assumed that "any critical theory is propogated with the idea that it will itself be the catalytic agent in the overthrow of a given social order" (p. 28), once it is able to provide for, in turn, enlightenment -- or the removal of false or divided consciousness, empowerment--or the enabling of the audience in order for them to act on their new consciousness, and emancipation --the removal of the original social order which is the root cause of the original suffering, and its radical restructuring.

Giroux (n.d.) regards the social crisis as precipitated by a modernist worldview whose

> ...claim to authority partly serves to privilege Western, patriarchal culture, on the one hand, while simultaneously repressing and marginalizing the voices of others who live outside of the dominant centers of power, that is, those others who have been deemed subordinate and/or subjected to relations of oppression because of their color, class, ethnicity, race, or cultural and social capital. In postmodernist terms, the political map of modernism is one in which the

voice of the other is consigned to the margins of existence, recognition, and possibility. (p.1-2, "Border Pedagogy").

Giroux regards the social crisis as both (in part) stemming from, and historically located within, education, which serves to oppress and repress "voices" outside the dominent culture. While other sources (e.g., Marx) have criticized other social institutions (e.g., the world of work, production and the formation of capital markets, or marriage), the most vocal, serious, and articulate of current critics have addressed themselves to the social structures of education. Such critical social science is not unitary. Rather, it is a <u>set</u> of theories, including: a theory of false consciousness, a theory of crisis, a theory of education, and a theory of "transformative action" (Fay, 1987, pp. 31-32). These four theories, in turn, are constituted of ten sub-theories. Because Fay has captured them concisely, they are reproduced here:

I. a theory of false consciousness...

1. demonstrates the ways in which the self-understandings of a group of people are false (in the sense of failing to account for the life experiences of the members of the group), or incoherent (because internally contradictory), or both. This is sometimes called an "ideology-critique";
2. explains how the members of this group came to have these self-misunderstandings, and how they are maintained;
3. contrasts them with an alternative self-understanding, showing how this alternative is superior.

II. a theory of crisis

4. spells out what a social crisis is;
5. indicates how a particular society is in such a crisis;
6. provides an historical account of the development of this crisis partly in terms of the false consciousness of the members of the group and partly in terms of the structural basis of the society.

III. a theory of education

7. offers an account of the conditions necessary and sufficient for the sort of enlightenment envisioned by the theory;

8. shows that given the current social situation these conditions are satisfied.

IV. a theory of transformative action...

9. isolates those aspects of a society which must be altered if the social crisis is to be resolved and the dissatisfaction of its members lessened;
10. details a plan of action indicating the people who are to be the 'carriers' of the anticipated social transformation and at least some general idea of how they might do this. (Fay, 1987, pp. 31-32).

For my purposes, not all sub-theories are equally important. For this discussion, and in the context of the literature on leadership and college students, the propositions (sub-theories) of the theory of crisis and the theory of transformative action are especially useful. For example, the theory of crisis "spells out what a social crisis is, [and] indicates how a particular society is in such a crisis". With respect to leadership, we appear to exist in a crisis on two counts: one, we do not fully comprehend how to locate and acquire leaders for institutions which are undergoing rapid social, economic and cultural change, and two, our theories of leadership have proven nearly sterile in assuring continuing (see, for instance, the lengths of time typically served by upper-echelon administrators in the same institution), stable, mature, and responsive leadership in higher education. With respect to the latter, we operate with great skill to locate persons, but the searches which are undertaken rarely rely on a body of theory (or even the descriptive literature) to guide the process.

With respect to college students, probably the greatest social crisis facing the higher education community has been the seeming inability or unwillingness to welcome and educate racial and ethnic minorities (Arbeiter, 19887; Franklin, 1987). Since these segments of the population are growing

faster than traditional college populations (white, middle-class), there exists some moral responsibility to see that such minorities take their rightful places in an educated society. We are failing on that social objective, failing badly, and it is generating a social crisis between the "haves" and the "have-nots". The historical account of the development of this crisis is less important in terms of the false consciousness of its victims than in the "structural basis of the society" -- a point to which researchers rarely ever turn.

Quite the opposite. Researchers have more often than not turned to demographic descriptions of the success rates of minorities (Cohen, 1988), and to sorting out the "variables" which appear to correlate highly with success or non-retention (Stewart, 1988), a process which has overtones of the sociological phenomenon known as "blaming the victim". Structural analyses of higher education as a social and cultural enterprise often reveals that its major function is sorting and certifying certain classes of persons (more often white, and middle- to upper-class) for professional, managerial and technical positions -- positions which act to concentrate wealth, power and influence in the hands of those who often had it already.

The sub-theory of transformative action would "isolate those aspects of a society which must be altered if the social crisis is to be resolved and the dissatisfaction of its members lessened" and indicate who might be the agents of this anticipated social rearrangement (Fay, 1987, p. 32). This suggests a research agenda for those who would be a part of the transformation of institutions of higher education. To adopt the stance and language of more radical critical theorists, oppressive and repressive structures operating within higher education would be identified and structurally recreated in

order to provide opportunities for students to enter, and to confront their false consciousness.

(The term "false consciousness" (or "divided consciousness") has problems all its own. It suggests that there is a "true", or "right", consciousness, thereby revealing the typically realist ontology of most critical theorists. There is no theoretical or substantive necessity for the critical perspective to adopt a realist stance [see, for instance, Fay's arguments, 1987, pp. 37ff.], and I do not. I prefer the assumption that some consciousnesses are more sophisticated, enlightened, and/or empowering or emancipatory than others, but that multiple sets of consciousness (constructions) can exist, depending on where one resides in the social structures under investigation.

The presumption that there exists one "true" consciousness creates a system whereby many do not have the "true" consciousness, but a few persons do. Thus, "true consciousness" and its possession begin to mark a "priesthood" of truth in much the same way that scientific method has done so in the past decades. My preference is to see many consciousnesses (or constructions) of varying degrees of sophistication, truth as that consensual construction to which we can agree (or agree to disagree), and to deny the possibility that only a few hold the critical "keys to the kingdom".)

A Larger Critical Agenda.

The philosophical position of critical social science, however, suggests a whole range of questions (beyond leadership and college students) which cannot be explored well (if at all) within the bounds of conventional science, but which can be both asked and examined well (especially if the realist ontological stance is abandoned in favor of a more constructivist, or

phenomenological, ontology [see, for instance, Tierney, 1987; Lincoln, 1989, in press]) utilizing critical theory. Some of the larger and more interesting questions are posed below, to suggest in what direction researchers might cast further inquiries.

First question: What are the underlying structures --the processes and unexamined social arrangements --of institutions of higher education which act to reproduce larger social structures, and how do those structures act to oppresses certain classes of persons? Examining the leadership literature with this question in mind forces one to confront the issues of why there are so few women in administration, so few minority persons, and why those who are there speak of barriers, discrimination, hostility, being closed out of the networks, and other horrors which their white or male counterparts rarely endure. The research on college students, particularly women and minority college students, would lead one to ask, why is it that the climate is so chilly, and/or why do so few survive to the "finish line" (degree completion)? What structures hinder or impede progress, what processes act to marginalize minorities either with respect to leadership, or with respect to attainment of the degrees which would almost guarantee access to middle- and upper-level professional positions?

Second question: Does higher education itself suffer from a "false" or "divided" consciousness? If so, does this have a bearing on the pretense that the university is not a moral entity? Parker Palmer (1987) argues that the dominant epistemology of higher education -- objectivism-- carries with it its own "moral trajectory" , a path of "trained schizophrenia" (p. 22). This objectivist schizophrenia trains those in academic institutions to "look at reality through objectivist lenses. They have always been taught about a

world out there somewhere apart from them, divorced from their...lives..." (p. 22). The objectivist lenses see a kind of emotional divorce from values, and hide the ethical and moral impact of the intersection of individuals' lives with their social institutions. "Objectivism," Palmer notes, "is essentially anticommunal. As long as it remains the dominant epistemology in higher education, I think we will make little progress on communal agendas...Objectivism, which destroys...[the building on an inward capacity for relatedness], must be countered if the academy is to make a contribution to the reweaving of community" (p. 24).

So long as the dominant form of discourse is about the self detached from the subject, the university is free to see itself in the same way as it sees its knowledge production activities: value-free, or at least value-neutral. The posture of value-neutrality conceals values which undergird the work of the university, and allow such organizations to claim the high ground of disinterestedness.

The divestment controversy is an excellent example of this posture. Some universities have dealt with the South African divestment crisis by claiming they are in no position to make "moral judgments" such as would be called for in the decision to divest. Some have simply claimed that they cannot be moral agents, while others have hidden behind the "prudent man"-investment argument (essentially, a market paradigm which operates to raise the best rate of return on investments possible, regardless of the product toward which the investment is directed). The argument misses the point that universities are organizations, made up of humans, and therefore cannot escape value-laden overtones to their collective human endeavors (Neururer, in progress).

This "false" (or, more accurately, "divided") consciousness of higher education as a social form creates and maintains the illusion of science (and knowledge production activities in general) as a "disinterested" business, apart from the concerns and preoccupations of those who practice it. Nothing could be farther from the truth, as studies of sex and gender have shown (Bleier, 1986).

Third question: How does the university's role in knowledge production and transmission function in reifying certain world views and dismissing to marginality others? Studies on primatology, sex roles, sex, and gender (Bleier, 1984, 1986; Haraway, 1986), and explorations of the rise and role of social scientists as policy experts (Silva and Slaughter, 1984; Slaughter, 1988), ought to give some clue as to how the knowledge production functions act as an ideological filter within institutions.

As Bleier notes regarding primatology and the cultural forms it embodied:

> Of significance in the newer feminist scholarship in primatology is that the previously missing viewpoint produced a body of knowledge that overturned long-held basic tenets and unquestioned assumptions in the field that formed the platform for the formulation of the most influential male-centered theories of human cultural evolution. The example of field primatology also tells us something about the sources of scientific knowledge, something about "seeing" as it relates to one's location within time and culture. In the absence of knowledge about female primates based on observations of their behaviors, primatologists then felt free to speculate about (that is, to construct) female primates in ways which allowed their imagined behaviors and characteristics to fit existing male-centered theories of human cultural evolution and thus to embellish, naturalize, and reinforce the social construction of human female and male genders and of relations of domination and subordination. (Bleier, 1986, p. 9, emphases added)

Thus, knowledge production has functioned to re-create social structures and constructs which appear to support the interests of the dominant class, a

largely male "privilege[d] Western, patriarchal culture" (Giroux, "Border Pedagogy", p. 1).

Fourth question: How do reconstructions of ways of knowing bring about and provide contradiction and conflict in academic organizations? Gumport (1989) provides us a clue in this direction with her studies of women's studies as a profession, and with an examination of the ways in which academic culture is becoming fragmented (Gumport, forthcoming). While it is widely presumed that ethnic and women's studies are subspecialties of larger academic disciplines (Clark, 1970), it can be argued that such "new disciplines" have at their core radically different ways of knowing (Palmer, 1987). Disagreement regarding the way we know or come to know (epistemology) has radical implications for the unity of the academic community. The conflict felt by individuals torn between their "home" disciplines and their substantive and/or political commitments, and the contradiction between disciplinary dictates regarding ways of knowing, and intuitive, self-revealed ways of knowing have, together, the potential to create a revolution in the academy.

It is probably possible to use the conflict and contradiction (Gumport, 1989) over the discourse of science and ways of knowing to leverage higher education out of its current state of "divided consciousness", but before that can be accomplished, we will probably need to understand the nature of the conflict/contradiction which confronts us. It is likely the case that we could also use this conflict or contradiction as a critical perspective teaching/modeling device, if we understood more about it. We have only begun, however, to understand that the phenomenon exists; we have no idea what its boundaries or parameters might be.

To relate this question to the larger leadership research, we might well ask, from a critical perspective, how the leadership of our institutions supports, rewards, searches out, and encourages those who might study this phenomenon, understand the conflict and contradiction, and utilize it to raise critical awareness on the part of students. Put into one wag's terms, Have you hired a critical theorist, a constructivist, or a feminist today? Have you promoted one this year?

To relate this question to the research on college students takes more time. We have tended to look at the curriculum as a thing apart from students, something which we imposed on students (at worst), or something in which we hoped to interest students (at best). But the curriculum has been a faculty invention (construction), based on larger cultural norms at a given college, and growing from persuasions about the nature of truth (Tierney, forthcoming). A "critical pedagogy" -- that is, a coherent theory of education, complete with an agenda for action-- has yet to come from the critical theorists, -- although such an agenda is in progress (Freire, 1989).

Simon (1988) draws a crucial distinction between teaching and pedagogy. Teaching, he says, "refers to specific strategies and techniques to use in order to meet predefined, given objectives" (p. 2). But pedagogy is a more complex activity: a

> discourse about practice whose aim is the enhancement of possibility;...Pedagogy refers to a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among particular sets of social relations. (p.2)

The problem, of course, is one which a colleague and I wailed at each other after reading a set of critical theorist pieces: "Yes, but how do you do it?" And indeed, Simon has taken on that exact question (1988, p. 3-4),

and concluded that the critical theory perspective has inadequately addressed "what must be done". Among other things, it may mean that we have to make and remake choices about materials to include or exclude in our teaching; justify the choices we make with strenuous arguments ; "acknowledge previous experience as legitimate content and challenge it at the same time"; determine how we will deal with popular memories and 'subjugated knowledges', especially if those cultural forms and dominant ideologies are racist, sexist, and/or violent; and figure out how we will cope with the marginality of our own students. This is no small agenda. It suggests that the sub-theory of education has given virtually no guidance for how one of us might use materials, how we might choose them, or how we might stumble our ways through a course from a critical theorist's pedagogical perspective. It's not that critical theorists know and won't tell us; the "how-to" is simply not in place.

The point is that with respect to the curriculum, we do not know -- at this time -- how to enact, on behalf of students, a curriculum which would emancipate them in any critical sense. We can teach them to think critically, but we cannot teach them (that is to say, we have no <u>program</u> for teaching them) to liberate themselves. (The old liberal arts curriculum was supposed to do this, but it clearly is not working for a large segment of higher education.) We have no clear-cut idea of how to use the contradiction and conflict which is even now present in academia as a model for helping students to understand social structures which impinge on and act to oppress their own lives. This is a pity.

Fifth and final question: <u>Who are to be the transformative agents for higher education?</u> Since the critical perspective demands a critical pedagogy,

it can be safely assumed that at least one set of transformative agents would come from the professoriate. It is they who are in charge of the curriculum, and they who engage in the most extensive contact with students.

But we might well look at leaders in higher education -- presidents, deans, chairpersons -- to see what roles they might play in the transformation of the academy, and in the provision of the means, materials, and models for transformative leadership. Transformative leadership is a topic currently under investigation, and although the topic is rarely engaged from a critical perspective, speculating on what it might mean in terms of a critical academy might be profitable.

Agents also of change are students themselves, in at least two ways: they provide the experience which is "official" curriculum content, the "voices" which have been marginalized (this is particularly true with racial and ethnic minorities and with women), and they bring one or more popular (albeit marginalized) cultures to institutions of higher education which can become the subject of ideological critique. They, within the critical perspective, are co-producers of knowledge (with teachers), and therefore, central in their interactions to the process of their own educations. Without an understanding of how they have been marginalized, no critical pedagogy can take place.

We might well study ways in which leaders, teachers and students all could become transformative agents in higher education, but we have done little of that to date.

A Postnote

I have tried to suggest that we have, as a community, asked and answered elegant questions about the structures and processes of higher education. Yet, despite our excellent research, we have little to guide us in decision making, virtually no way to hold on to students who should be getting the best we have to offer, and theories which provide little practical help in administration, leadership, pedagogy, or matching students with institutions. We mostly operate by the seat of our pants. I am not suggesting, however, that we need more elegant, predictive, or prescriptive theories. What I am suggesting is that we take a longer and deeper look at the institutions we have studied, to see what we might have missed.

I myself am not a critical theorist, as readers of the paper will probably recognize immediately, nor do I make any pretense of being one. I am, more properly, a constructivist (as earlier arguments regarding the nature of false consciousness should have made plain)--a "naturalistic inquirer", a phenomenologist. As such, I believe reality is a multiple (rather than singular), enacted, social construction. Constructions can be simplistic or sophisticated, and may be enlarged and refined as information and/or understanding expands. Thus, "false" (or simplistic, or naive, or misinformed, or inadequate) consciousnesses could be replaced or reconstructed by more socially aware (critical, informed) and/or consensual constructions. I am, however, as reluctant to accept the critical theorists' "explanations" as the sole explanation as I am to accept the conventional scientists' "explanations" for "how things really are". Each is no more than one lens through which we might see. The point, of course, is purpose -- to what

purpose is the research to be put? -- and fit -- how well do the assumptions of the research model (paradigm) fit the phenomenon under investigation?

What ties me to the critical perspective in some intellectual sense is both the intuition that they are asking some good questions (some of which I have tried to raise here), and the conviction that institutions of higher education are no longer acting as a democratizing, emancipatory, or transformative force in American life. In short, the ideological critique which the critical perspective mounts against the academy -- or which it should be mounting -- is a persuasive one to me, and I have tried to utilize two bodies of literature widely researched to demonstrate, however lightly, that institutions are in a social crisis, that this crisis is in part due to the academy's dominant epistemology (objectivism), and that structural analyses might well reveal in what ways we could transform institutions of higher education so as to enable them to act in more empowering and emancipatory ways.

I have tried to indicate that in terms of change, you can't get there (to transformation) from here (current mainstream research). One profitable detour could well be questions that the critical perspective poses.

Notes

[1] Read, typically, by scholars and researchers, and by those trained in and practicing higher education administration.

[2] For the same journals, and for the same years (1984-1989).

[3] The process of "discovering" the axioms of logical positivism, a task to which I turned my attention some years ago (see, for instance, Guba and Lincoln, 1981, and Lincoln and Guba, 1985), turned out to be quite a feat. Even philosophers do not agree among themselves about what constitute the central or core beliefs of the logical positivists. In my and Guba's early work, we simply tried to analyze (via content analysis) what the undergirding assumptions of contemporary scientific method might be. Later, we adopted the conventions of philosophers, and talked about the axiomatic assumptions of conventional science in terms of its ontology, epistemology and methodology, and the implications of the worldview of logical positivism for each of those critical arenas in conventional inquiry.

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